

Pelican bay offers safe anchorage for vessels of light draft

Another Treasure Island

By HEATHERWICK KIRK

SANTA CATALINA excepted, it is remarkable how little is known of the Santa Barbara channel islands. Separated from the mainland by only a few miles, they are to the people dwelling nearest to them as remote and unknown as far off continents. Only the fishermen, the seal hunters, the few island ranchers, and now and then a small party of summer campers bolder than others, ever visit their shores. This is particularly true of the four islands lying farthest to the westward. Of these, San Miguel boldly stems the currents of the open Pacific and faces the brisk gales of the freshening trades. Farthest east of this sub-group is the triple Anacapa, well named Island of Delusion, constantly changing its appearance in the drifting mists and elusive mirage. Nearest to San Miguel is Santa Rosa, broad and fertile, with its own

romance of love and litigation too long to be given in this article. Between Santa Rosa and Anacapa lies the island of Santa Cruz, larger, more varied and far more beautiful than all the other islands combined.

When Cabrillo coasted along the shores of California in 1542, Santa Cruz was densely populated; but in 1790, the early part of the mission period, only a few inhabitants remained, and these were gradually removed by the padres to the vicinity of the Santa Barbara mission. The cause of the depopulation was this: the Russians and Aleuts on their annual seal hunts, continued through more than a century, pillaged the island, massacred the men and children, and carried off the women. Only the relic hunters now find traces of the number and character of these islanders in the stone disks, mortars, arrow-heads,

and ornaments of bone or shell scattered thickly throughout the island.

Santa Cruz is a geological puzzle. Naturally, on account of its nearness, many geologists consider it a fragment broken off from the mainland. Others, perhaps more discerning as to its internal structure, assert that like its neighbors it is a little continent by itself, or a remnant of a larger continent, now a lost Atlantis, submerged in the sea. It is certainly a curious study of stratified and volcanic rocks jumbled together in bewildering confusion.

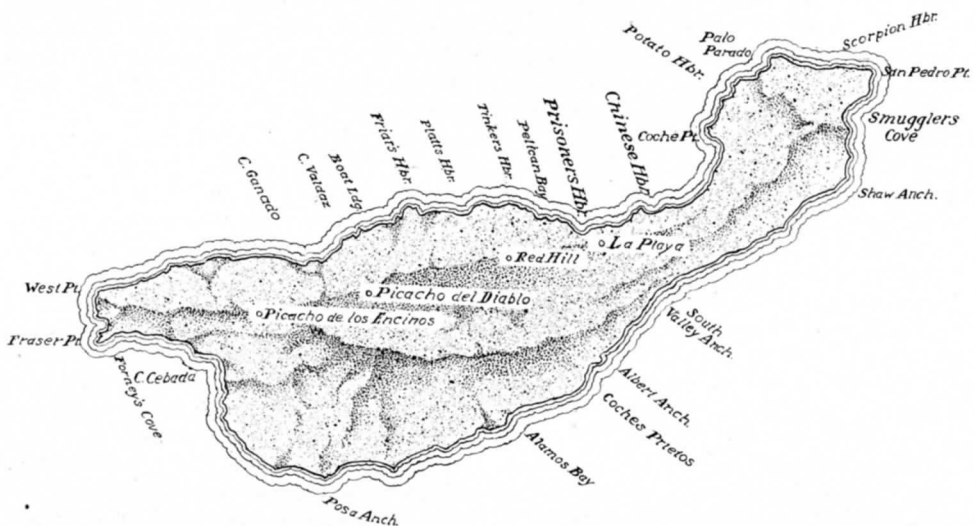
Mountain ranges, intersected by numerous cross ridges, traverse the island from east to west. The highest mountains are Picacho del Diablo and Picacho de los Encinos. The ultimate peak of the latter rises, like a citadel, above a forest of live oaks. The view from both Diablo and Encinos is magnificent—seaward over a limitless blue expanse, shoreward to the far summits of the Santa Ynez and San Rafael ranges vanishing in a soft, dreamy haze. At other times, the open sea, the channel, the neighboring islands, Santa Cruz itself, all save the distant mountains, disappear, while Diablo and Encinos lift their heads and look out upon a white billowy sea of motionless clouds flashing in the brilliant sunlight. But from the depths

below, into the breathless silence above, rise the distant bleat of wandering sheep and the joyful song of the mocking bird.

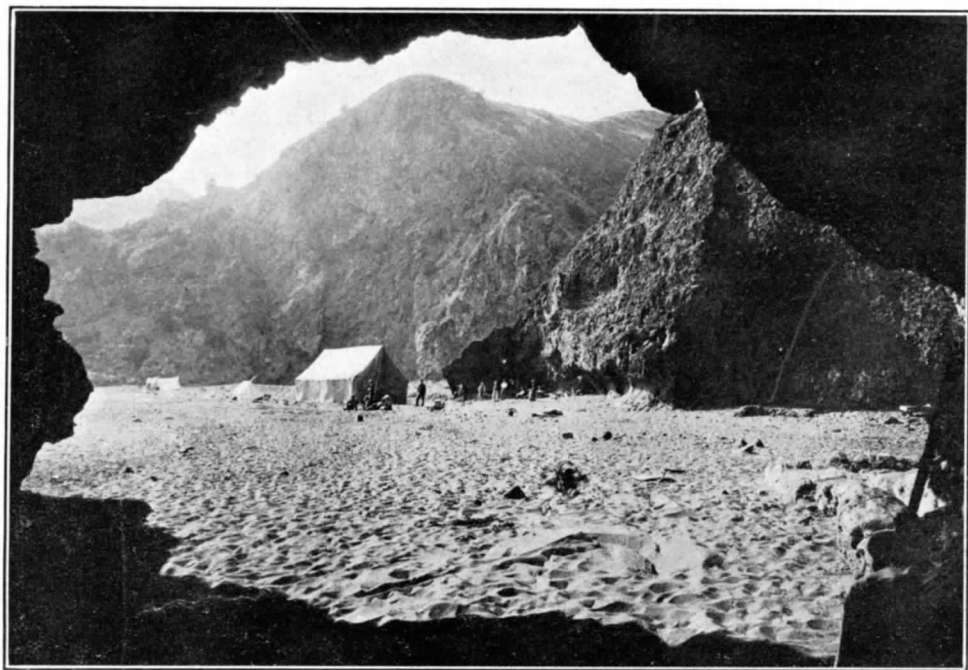
Gulches dense with chaparral; deep, narrow canyons dark with the foliage of giant oaks; winding cañadas traced by clear summer brooks that become swift rock-rolling torrents in winter; hill slopes to which groves of wild cherry cling; precipitous cliffs and sea walls honey-combed with dark-throated caverns; these are ever present features in the landscapes of Santa Cruz.

Many coves and small bays are found at the mouths of the cañadas. These afford safe anchorage for vessels of light draft, and are very convenient for persons who wish to camp and cruise alternately along shore.

The most picturesque part of the shore lies between Pelican bay and the western end of the island. Here the sea has cut archways through the volcanic reefs and projecting headlands, and at one place in Valdez harbor has tunneled through the rocky side of a wild mountain gorge to meet the descending stream. On the other side of Valdez harbor is Valdez cave, with its three grand entrances. The middle one leads from the sea to a landing in the center of the cave; another opens upon the level sands; and the third, through a lofty dome, leads



SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, FROM THE MAP MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT SURVEY



LOOKING OUT OF VALDEZ CAVE ON THE SANDS OF VALDEZ HARBOR

N. H. Reed, photo

to a beach piled high with gigantic rocks. For many miles, westward from Valdez, the cliffs and headlands rise abruptly and plant their feet firmly on the reefs or in the deep sea. All along their bases are beautiful marine gardens brilliant with the color of mineral rocks, sea weeds, fan corals, anemones, abalone, and other shells.

Just beyond Profile point is a sea cave with towering arch. Nothing could be finer, you say; but your opinion is forgotten a few minutes later when you enter the Painted cave. It opens like the nave of a great Norman cathedral, its lofty, wide-sprung arches resting on massive pillars to left and right. The arches and groin-like ceilings are bright with many colors that contrast with the reds and blacks of the volcanic rocks. Gradually, the side walls approach each other, and the arches descend as one proceeds farther inward. The sea swells and falls uncannily under the advancing boat, and one is almost terrified by the loud, ceaseless thunder of compressed air and rushing waters, the effect of which

is increased by the echoed and re-echoed barking of the frightened sea-lions that plunge from the shelving niches into the water. Five or six hundred feet from the entrance, the cave turns at a sharp angle to the right and vanishes immediately in darkness. A hundred feet farther, if one dare venture in, the cave divides into two chambers. There is a boat landing at the end of one; from the other comes the menacing voice of the water and air surging and roaring deep in the heart of the mountain.

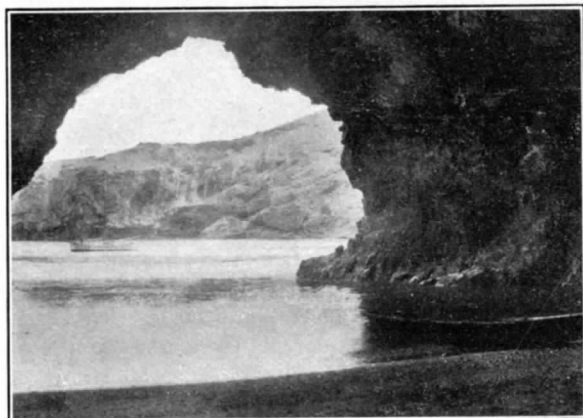
Turning sharply around the first point west of the Painted cave into a narrow rock-walled bight, two more cave entrances appear on the left—very low, but sending out the same loud thunder of waters and bark of sea-lions. Westward still, there are many more cave openings; and one of the caves is a worthy rival of the Painted cave itself. It is entered in the same way, by boat from the open sea.

The flora of Santa Cruz is very interesting. Flowers abound in the spring season and overspread the country with



N. H. Reed, photo

The most picturesque part of the shore



Here the sea has cut archways through the volcanic reefs



CANNING CRAWFISH ON SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

masses of bright color, while mosses and ferns grow rankly in shady nooks, or cling to the sides of water-dripping rocks. Several species of plants are not found elsewhere. Two dense pine forests flourish on the island. The larger extends along the shore between Orizaba and Prisoner's Harbor, and inland toward the Cañada del Medio; the other is found at the western end of the island on the slopes of the Cañada del Pinos, to which it gives its name.

All of the species of fish known to the California coast are rife in the waters about Santa Cruz. In the early morning we saw great schools of yellow-tail in pursuit of small fry. They kept the sea in a turmoil; and hundreds of cormorants, gulls, and pelicans followed hard in their wake to pick up the remains of the feast. Near the shore the rock cod and bass fishing is excellent; and almost mid-channel trolling for large albacore is an intensely exciting sport. The West Coast Fishing Company, under the terms of a lease, has erected a cannery at Pelican bay, and in every cove one runs across the Chinese and Italian crawfishers who are in the employ of the company. Here and there, too, Japanese are seen diving for abalones.

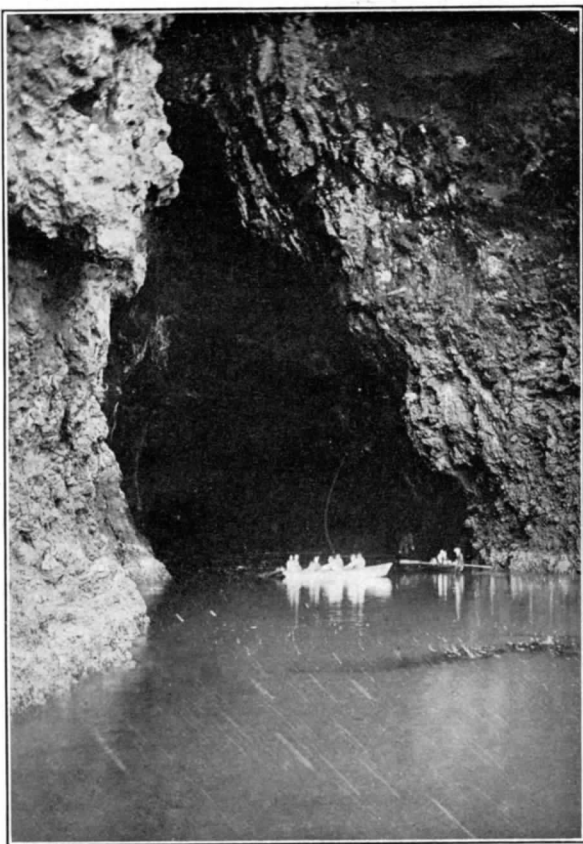
Many seal rookeries are discovered along shore. Both the black and leopard seals still come here to breed. Occasionally, as of old, they are hunted for oil and pelts; but more frequently to supply living specimens for the zoological parks of the east and foreign countries.

Santa Cruz is hardly a hunter's paradise, but it offers some sport in the way of small game. A small red-gray fox

and a few sea otters offer some inducement to trappers upon whom time hangs heavily; while wild boar will try the mettle of a plucky Nimrod. This particular wild boar may be only the descendant of the domestic pig; if so, he has differentiated enough to become long-snouted, slab-sided, razor-backed, and rhinoceros-hided. His jaw is stubbornly firm, with long, protruding tusks; and he fiercely attacks horses, dogs and men without a moment's hesitation. It is his habit to come down the canyon at night, perhaps to catch a whiff of the sea breeze. Recently a gentleman went up the canyon to sleep, that he might politely meet his boarship half way. When the meeting occurred, the boar was clad only in erect bristles and gleaming tusks and the gentleman in undress pajamas. It took four shots to silence his boarship, and the man between shots sprinted in bare feet and flying pajamas to the friendly cover of the largest rocks and trees he could find.

Santa Cruz has had several owners since aboriginal days. For a brief period, the Mexican government used it as a penal station. Next it came into the possession of Castillero, the discoverer of the New Almaden quicksilver mines, to whom the Mexican government, it is said, gave Santa Rosa island in reward for his discovery, and afterward Santa Cruz in exchange for Santa Rosa. Castillero then sold Santa Cruz to Barron, Forbes & Co., and Jecker, Torre & Co. It now belongs to the Santa Cruz Island Company, a close corporation principally made up of the heirs of the late Justinian Caire of San Francisco.

The island, ninety-one square miles in area, is divided into several large ranches



Painted Cave opens like the nave of a great Norman cathedral

connected by telephone and under the charge of a general superintendent. The principal ranch-house is situated near the junction of the Cañada del Puerto with the Cañada del Medio, four miles inland from Prisoner's harbor, where the company has its warehouses, and the postoffice, La Playa, is situated.

Grapes, olives, wine, poultry, sheep, and wool are shipped in large quantities. Thousands of sheep wander over the hills, and the very day this is written fifty sheep-shearers have left the mainland for the island.

By way of summary it may be said that Santa Cruz island is almost a princely domain in extent and resources. Its climate is similar to that of the mainland, but with greater sweep of ocean winds, colder nights and cooler days. It is, however, mild and equable.

Its hunting and fishing are good enough to satisfy ardent sportsmen. Its scenic beauty is ever fresh and enticing. It affords a wide field for relic-hunters. It provides interesting problems for the scientist and antiquarian. And if there be anything else dear to a tourist's heart, it doubtless possesses it—even to fabulous treasures (as indeed is currently believed) hidden by pirates in long lost caves.

Leaving its agricultural resources entirely out of consideration, Santa Cruz island has a great and prosperous future before it; and with all of the above named attractions to its credit, will probably become the greatest island resort of the Pacific coast. But this will only come to pass after suitable hotels have been built upon it and the transit of the channel between Santa Barbara and the island has been improved.

New Year in the West

By ALFRED J. WATERHOUSE

Shimmer and shine of the sunlight;
 Whispering leaves of the trees,
 And in and out in a merry rout
 The elves of the jocund breeze,
 Chasing the sunbeam phantoms
 That dance on the earth's warm breast;
 And this, I say, is our New Year's Day,
 Our New Year in the west.

Blossom and bud of the summer
 Smiling through all of the year,
 Till winter's face is a thing of grace
 And his cold looks disappear.
 Suns through the azure sailing,
 Like gems on the day god's crest;
 And this, I say, is our New Year's Day,
 Our New Year in the west.

Never a breath from the Arctic;
 Only the sunlight's cheer,
 And cheery days, like a song of praise
 That runs through a vernal year.
 The chorus of birds, rejoicing
 That theirs is a lot the best,—
 And this, I say, is our New Year's Day,
 Our New Year in the west.